UNITED
NATIONS

ST

Secretariat

Dist.
LIMITED

ST/SG/AC.6/1997/L.2
5 May 1997

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

GROUP OF EXPERTS ON THE UNITED NATIONS
PROGRAMME ON PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
AND FINANCE
Thirteenth meeting
27 May-4 June 1997

CREATION AND MAINTENANCE OF A SOUND GOVERNANCE ENVIRONMENT

Report prepared by the Secretariat*

CONTENTS

		Paragraphs	Page
I.	INTRODUCTION	1 - 15	2
II.	VISION AND LEADERSHIP	16 - 22	5
III.	CIVIL SOCIETY EMPOWERMENT	23 - 28	7
IV.	PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS	29 - 39	8
V.	SPECIAL CASE: POST-CONFLICT SITUATIONS	40 - 49	11

* In the preparation of this document the Secretariat benefited from the support of Mr. James Katorobo who acted as a consultant.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. As the twenty-first century approaches, many Governments have been seeking to strengthen governance institutions and relationships in their countries in order to improve the social and material conditions of the people. Governance, which is a society-wide process, rather than a specific policy outcome, generally involves an opening up of processes to both participation and public scrutiny. Rather than a distant State-client relationship, partnership relations between Government and society are nurtured in order to promote development and well-being, especially within a framework of rule of law, which provides a level playing field for social and economic activities. Indeed, paragraph 4 of the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development,[1] adopted at the World Summit for Social Development, stated that "democracy and transparency and accountability of governance and administration in all sectors of society are indispensable foundations for the realization of social and people-centred sustainable development".

2. The exact nature of governance characteristics and governance-enabling programmes depends upon the social, economic, and historical context. Conditions of peace, stability, social integration, resource endowment, economic development, and "rule of law" influence the style of social interaction and the relationship between Government and society. The degree of misfit between current national conditions and the trends in the global economy and the information age determine the extent of need for re-alignment of institutional and managerial processes, and the amount of stress and strain on governance processes.

3. Governance is closely linked to both development and peace. Development strategies can more effectively be pursued when widespread participation supports commitment to a shared vision. Furthermore, government institutions and national development provide a platform for peace and stability which further strengthen economic progress and development. When peace, development and governance processes coincide, one can usually identify effective institutional arrangements, streamlined decision-making processes, inclusive policy formulation, participatory implementation capacity, multidimensional information flows, and a vigorous partnership between Government and society.

4. Several cultural characteristics also influence the degree of flexibility and adaptability to changing circumstances, notably, embrace or avoidance of uncertainty, centralization or deconcentration of power, degree of emphasis on hierarchy, and long as well as short-term orientation. The most adaptive culture involves uncertainty-embrace, diverse power centres, less hierarchical organizations and long-term orientation.

5. During the last decades, many societies have been affected by dramatic shifts in economic and/or political framework, resulting from transition to market economy, violent conflict or need to provide more effective services at lower cost. Especially in the case of violent conflict, events disrupt economic development efforts and challenge political processes to mitigate violence and establish peaceful means of conflict resolution. Under these conditions, the government administrative machinery is both a victim and a solution. First,

government administrative machinery is a sought-after prize of social conflict and often breaks down under economic stress or war-like conditions of upheaval, uncertainty and distrust. But while the processes of Government are disrupted, it is these same government institutions which can be re-oriented to establish a basis for reconciliation, stability and renewal of social and economic life.

6. In order for sustainable governance to emerge, strong leadership capabilities and civil society empowerment are needed. Government institutions and administrative machinery need to be capable of stimulating economic development, managing mechanisms of conflict resolution and prevention, and delivering programmes for social development. Appropriateness and success of these policies and operations depend upon widespread citizen participation in policy dialogue and implementation strategies that involve private sector, non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations.

7. This complex situation contains many interrelated elements, each of which cannot be dealt with in isolation, but must be approached within a holistic, integrated framework. Governance is inherently multidimensional, especially focusing on social, political, legal and economic aspects. Indeed, appropriately combining social, political, legal and economic strategies can provide a catalyst for dynamic, multisectoral development progress. The strongest development tools are those that utilize a multi-systems approach to capture and make sense of complexity. In each sector - for example, education, health, employment and production - and for each level - for example, national, intermediate and local - there are many systems and subsystems; all lead to purposeful results linked to a development vision. When improvements in these various systems are linked strategically, the systems are mutually supportive and most productive.

8. Research on futures indicates both a trend of "variety" and a trend of "dynamics". The trend of variety recognizes the increasing number of relevant influences on any system, stakeholder or action. The trend of dynamics recognizes the increased rate of change, as in shortened production cycles and the doubling of human knowledge, allegedly, every five years. In order to cope and be successful in such an environment, national governance systems need to be open, flexible and adaptable to changes in the network of relevant relationships. Indeed, prudent leaders guide their organizations in the development of multiple future scenarios through systems thinking.

9. Strategies can be based on (a) scenarios with the greatest opportunities, (b) scenarios with the greatest probability, and (c) scenarios with the greatest threats. When leaders embrace the future through scenario building, they are more able to lead their governance systems to outcomes that are useful for social and economic development. As well, scenarios taking into account multiple systems and networks of systems lead to outcomes with fewer surprises and greater progress. Leaders incorporating systems thinking, feedback, and learning into their strategies can develop programmes that are more adaptive and innovative.

10. Examples of single systems are feedback, finance, marketing, personnel, planning, legal, information, monitoring and evaluation. The next higher level of "organization" is illustrated by a health clinic, corporation or school,

which operates many systems and subsystems. At the single sector level, one finds, for example, the banking sector, the health sector and the rural sector. At the multisectoral level, one finds joint development of, for example, the production sector, encompassing many organizations and thousands of single systems, all connected by contractual and input-output linkages. At the level of the whole economy or the whole society, or even the whole "governance system", one finds thousands of organizations with millions of systems activated by personnel who perceive that they are operating within one or more system or sets of systems. As well, national governance systems are situated within specific regional and global systems that influence opportunities and constraints for each national governance system. With complexity growing, managerial systems are under greater demands for effectiveness. The performance of leaders and other stakeholders within national governance systems improves when they comprehend these complex systemic relationships and can maximize productive activities within a dynamic three-dimensional web of systems.

11. Many societies are in the midst of the transition to a market economy and find themselves situated in an unstable equilibrium between a central planning orientation and a systems approach appropriate to market economies. The relevant shifts include change to entrepreneurial managerial skills, decentralization of economic management decisions, re-orientation to a contractual legal framework, and complex Government-society relations. Neglect of any element - behavioral, institutional, legal or partnership - can lead to weakness in related elements. In situations in transition, government institutions provide an enabling policy framework and a regulatory legal framework in order to guide and facilitate private sector and entrepreneurial development.

12. These essential activities require strong leadership capacity in both coordination of priority setting and effectiveness of operations. With open participation of a wide variety of social actors, government priorities can represent agreed-upon policy decisions concerning the future directions of social and economic policies. The very existence of a policy-development dialogue that involves a wide variety of interests, especially those of post-conflict combatants, is a testament to the rebuilding of the political fabric of the society. The establishment of an administrative machinery for governmental operations leads not only to the delivery of needed services but also to the rebirth of confidence in national political and administrative processes. Commitment to individual, family and community development reinforces the central role of government administrative machinery to facilitate sustainable development.

13. The United Nations is involved in a wide variety of governance-strengthening activities. These governance programmes promote strong institutions in public, private and civil society sectors. Specific activities involve strengthening legal frameworks, especially for human rights and business contracts; service delivery, including social, economic and security issues; policy-making and implementation, especially in key policy clusters; decentralization, including strengthening local governments; private sector development, including entrepreneurship and privatization; non-governmental organizations, and related organizations, especially in their role of promoting access to decision-making and services; electoral commissions and electoral

processes, including registration and civic education; legislatures, courts and ombudsmen, especially training personnel and establishing management information systems; media, as it relates to public policies, the expression of citizen needs and the examination of government performance; and attention to promotion of tolerance, harmony, solidarity and conflict resolution, as well as reduction of corruption.

14. These governance activities are strongly motivated and directed by General Assembly resolution 50/225. In that resolution, the Assembly reaffirmed that democracy and transparent and accountable governance and administration in all sectors of society are indispensable foundations for the realization of social and people-centred sustainable development (para. 5). It recommended focusing activities on, inter alia, strengthening government capacity for policy development, administrative restructuring, civil service reform, human resources development and public administration training (para. 13). In working towards these goals of strengthening governance, the Assembly emphasized the value of international cooperation and stressed the need for increased cooperation and coordination between the United Nations programmes.

15. Overall, these governance activities are designed to increase participation, strengthen accountability mechanisms, and open channels of communication among people, institutions and organizations. All interventions are guided by principles of participation, accountability and openness. Key elements are (a) vision and leadership, (b) civil society empowerment, (c) public institutions, and (d) special case of post-conflict situations.

II. VISION AND LEADERSHIP

16. For society, "vision" fulfils a function of providing a focus or direction for action that motivates people to participate in activities for the improvement of social and economic well-being. A high quality vision gives priority to the poor, advances women, sustains the environment and creates needed opportunities for employment and other livelihoods. In the widest sense, a governance vision represents "the future" to the present; that is, the vision includes a long-term, strategic approach to social and economic development within a framework of resource conservation and social integration. A vision can motivate best when many individuals, organizations and sectors participate in conceptualizing the vision and share in establishing and maintaining dynamism. A major role of governance is the linkage

17. When each social, economic and political organization is expected to have a point of view and interests, it is government institutions through representation and participation that can portray cohesive social values and especially provide a platform for discussing and integrating various interests. Many mechanisms, such as decentralized planning, scenario-building and future-search conferences, promote the development of development strategies that are socially responsible and economically practical, as well as create a compelling sense of direction for the society.

18. Government leaders in a wide variety of institutions need to be technically competent, politically astute, and skilled in building consensus and

partnerships. While there are many models of governance systems, every model has some mechanism(s) for developing leadership, including selection, recruitment, training, experiencing and working together in various governmental institutions. Both specialized technical and managerial competence are necessary in order to operationalize vision into strategies, programmes and activities for development. Improvement and intensification of these leadership development processes are key to achieving development successes, especially in a highly complex and competitive international environment. Many Governments are establishing sensitization and skill-building programmes for top leadership, often not only for senior civil servants, but also for politicians and leaders of private sector organizations and non-governmental and community-based organizations.

19. In the 1990s, expectations of leaders are high, behavioral models are few and unproven, old rewards and perquisites are slipping away, and there is widespread dissatisfaction, finger pointing and occasionally even violence towards leaders. The international context requires leaders capable of inventing visionary programmes, managing detailed activities to successful outcomes and communicating across cultures, communities and conflicts.

20. These modern leaders suited to organizing societies and institutions for the twenty-first century conditions are participatory, rather than authoritarian. Whether through party mobilization mechanisms, multi-partyism, community-based activism or sector advocacy, leaders need to encourage expression of perception and interest in order to result in a society-wide vision that can be implemented with enthusiasm and dynamism. Equally important is the flow of information among all stakeholders, who are encouraged to review operations and results in order to improve effectiveness and efficiency. Through a wide variety of accountability mechanisms, including ombudsman, legislature, auditor-general, and policy dialogue, people are informed and able to hold Government accountable for its operations and results.

21. To achieve sustainability in social cohesion and economic development, government institutions need to encourage participation of all sectors in a wide variety of accountability mechanisms. Through this participation, individuals and organizations will be knowledgeable about development programmes and committed to integrating their efforts into national efforts, thus enabling everyone to contribute to the realization of a national vision of progress. Through regular and periodic accountability reports, everyone can measure the efficacy of their efforts and improve their contribution to national progress. If some segments of society are lagging behind in participation in development efforts and/or benefits, or if some activities such as corruption are identified as detrimental to development, accountability mechanisms can identify these facts and lead to resolution of issues.

22. An example of an innovative and participatory accountability mechanism is community-based benchmarks. Through a visioning, specification and targeting process, community members are able to contribute to the process of determining current levels of development indicators for their community and setting reasonable targets for future development activities. This governance benchmark process establishes a regular mechanism for a representative cross-section of a community to development and update community development indicators

(benchmarks) for measuring the attainment of those goals. The benchmarks are developed through widespread participation in the community, which not only can steer their community participation towards these goals, but also can hold the Government accountable for the use of resources for the achievement of these goals. Owing to the increasing popularity of decentralization as a strategy for economic and social development throughout the world, this governance benchmark process can be an attractive mechanism for achieving a development vision through community-based government.

III. CIVIL SOCIETY EMPOWERMENT

23. Widespread participation in governance processes results in more sustainable social and economic development for the widest range of citizens. A serious constraint is literacy; that is, people can best participate when they can read, write and understand political discourse, when they can engage in social interaction on an equal basis, and when they can initiate and maintain economic activities. Literacy and understanding also contribute to the ability to vote in political elections, to read laws, policies and reports, to share ideas and perspectives with each other, and to link their economic activities with the national and global economies. Government plays a major role in encouraging a literate, numerate and informed citizenry. Government educational institutions provide basic knowledge and access to information. In the 1990s, this access can include facilitating linkage to the Internet and its information resources and communication channels.

24. Empowerment of civil society encourages diversity of views, sharing of individual and organizational responsibility, learning-focused strategies, and the emergence of formal leaders who serve as stewards of their societies. Meaningful involvement includes, from most passive to most active, (a) awareness of current conditions and future orientations, (b) participation in social, political and economic activities, and (c) initiative in developing approaches to the future. With awareness, participation and initiative, citizens can influence their context and contribute to their development. Opportunities for civil society involvement include both interest group politics and consultative institutions, such as policy conferences, leadership summit meetings and community consultations.

25. Empowerment of civil society further entails facilitation and encouragement of civil society organizations as platforms for individual participation in policy dialogues and access to the means to communicate views and perspectives. These civil society organizations institutionalize and give voice to public concerns. Under optimal governance conditions, public institutions welcome initiatives and feedback from citizens and respond actively to the needs and viewpoints. Although lively public dialogue can be time-consuming, the agreement and commitment that results ensures sustainability of public policies and programmes. In some cases, public dialogue is an "investment" in social cohesion and dynamic economic development.

26. Well-tuned governance facilitates involvement of trade unions, employer organizations, religious organizations, cultural organizations, public interest organizations, community-based organizations and political organizations. These

organizations are not only allowed to operate with relatively little regulation but they are given a regular and institutionalized voice in policy debates, thereby providing fully for interaction between government and civil society. Although distance can be a barrier to effective participation, government can facilitate participation through face-to-face conferencing, radio, television and where available, electronic means.

27. Where there exists multidimensional sharing of information and perspectives through public dialogue, shared vision and social consensus can emerge and be supported through mutual interaction, appreciation and joint participation in national initiatives especially for economic development. Through policy dialogues, people and organizations develop commitment to working together.

28. Participatory governance training is an effective way to energize a society for achieving shared goals. For example, multi-organizational and multi-level governance training that involves not only local government officials and staff, but also citizen-constituents and representatives of central Government encourages local governance. In this case, effective capacity-building of local government can best be achieved by recognizing key elements of the context and integrating that context into the training; that is, learning skills of communication, coordination and interaction between local government, citizens and representatives of line ministries.

IV. PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

29. Within a governance context, public institutions play a key role in providing mechanisms for sharing of information and coordinating activities. In their role of "representing the future to the present", public institutions embody the agreed-upon development vision of the society and provide a platform for cooperation and coordination. An enabling bureaucracy facilitates community responses to real contingencies that emerge in the course of historical and everyday life.

30. For example, "rule of law", a keystone of governance relationships, is facilitated by an independent and efficient judicial system supported by sound police facilities and an affordable and speedy court system. Social relations, and especially business contracts, depend upon an objective justice system open to all petitioners and protecting human rights as modelled in the many international conventions, usually facilitated by the United Nations. As well, a sound constitutional framework provides for judicial review of government actions, usually performed by an independent court or council of the judiciary. For justice systems to function, programmes need to be developed for facilities, finance, human resources and public information and access.

31. Equally important to governance is the establishment and maintenance of representative institutions, such as legislatures at national, intermediate and local levels. Legislatures provide space for open policy dialogue and debate. When citizens and organizations have the opportunity to voice their needs and perspectives, they are more likely to participate in nation-building programmes and compromises. Like justice systems, legislatures have finance, human

resources, information and facility needs. Essential also is strong linkage to constituents on a continuing basis.

32. Political transitions through elections and other expressions of popular views, such as referenda and public initiatives, represent the orderly reflection of shifts in popular sentiment. Currently, increasing numbers of Governments are holding national, intermediate and local elections, supported by voter registration and civic education, in order to attain greater public awareness, support and participation in development activities. Generally, elections are very popular and people are eager to learn and practise civic responsibilities and duties. Election institutions are responsible not only for voter registration and civic education, but for the many technical aspects of carrying out the balloting and counting processes.

33. A further expression of institutional development is the strengthening of decentralization and local governments. In addition to defence and foreign relations, many key governmental development functions are most likely to be performed through institutional monopolies, primarily at the centre. These centre-focused functions include macroeconomic stabilization and redistributive allocations to vulnerable sections of society, although actual allocations can be made through deconcentrated administration. As well, the comparative advantage of central institutions in mobilizing finance is likely to continue, with local-level governmental units still dependent upon them.

34. On the other hand, decentralization involves a shift of some or all responsibility for a governmental function to local administration and/or local governments. Criteria for central-local allocation of responsibilities are guided by three design principles: accountability, efficiency and effectiveness. Together these three principles optimize the mobilization of public resources. Accountability means holding public servants responsible for the outcome, efficiency is the positive relationship of resource outputs to inputs, and effectiveness is a measure of the appropriateness of outputs. Within the context of governance, accountability takes on the greatest importance, largely because it is a way to achieve efficiency and effectiveness.

35. When roles and tasks are not monopolized but shared between central and non-central public and private levels, greater accountability is achievable. When tasks are performed by a monopoly, usually centralized, services are delivered at higher costs, with less efficiency and within a less accountable framework. Referring to roles and tasks makes administrative design both concrete and dynamic. It is concrete, for role directly relates task and the organization or institution. It is dynamic, because role can change over time and be managed by different organizations, institutions or combinations of them. Distribution of tasks to local governments requires a significant capacity for policy development and implementation. Scarcity of capacity at local level is a continuing issue for late-developing countries.

36. Inefficient management often occurs at both headquarters and deconcentrated field levels because accountability systems are weak or non-existent. Thus, decentralization requires strategies not only for adequately resourcing local governments but also for holding local public institutions accountable for programme operations and outcomes. Often, either the centre highly

circumscribes local discretion or few or no resources are available for acting upon the discretion. Accountability manages discretion, and discretion is the essence of administrative decentralization.

37. A strong centre, with a relevant enabling environment, is a prerequisite to meaningful and effective spatial decentralization and is necessary for role decentralization. Obstacles that impede decentralization include coordination and monitoring, as well as regulatory and feedback frameworks. Currently, many Governments are in the midst of experimenting with decentralization of strategies, most notably with development planning and service delivery. The great variety in experiments makes for fertile ground for international exchange of experience and expertise, particularly through South-to-South cooperation.

38. None of these institutional strategies or partnerships can be successful without a strong, informed and committed public service, with the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes. The scarcity of a skilled public workforce is especially critical at local levels, where the greatest number of civil servants are needed, often to fulfil sensitive responsibilities for remote populations. Being the backbone of public institutions, the public service contributes to ethical action frameworks, implementation capacity and national consciousness. Entrusted with public responsibilities and public resources, civil servants need to be trained to focus on the public interest within a context of a sustainable future. Public institutions, as well as the civil servants that manage them, need to be held accountable through various mechanisms, such as legislatures, elections, ombudsman, audits and benchmarks. These governance elements link public institutions, civil servants, leaders and citizens in the context of a publicly agreed-upon development vision that guides accountability, feedback and organizational learning. Indeed, accountability mechanisms are a key linkage among stakeholders in governance.

39. Effective performance of civil servants and public institutions results from clarity of purpose, explicit responsibility, dynamic coordination, results-orientation, linking results and costs, and instilling values that promote performance. In a complex and changing world, with multiple systems and many levels, organizational performance depends upon doing the right task very well and at least cost. In a sound governance condition, the performance of central institutions, i.e., policy frameworks that they establish operational ministries, agencies and local administrations and governments, is monitored, measured - both quantitatively and qualitatively - and evaluated, using performance indicators and benchmarks to provide feedback and learning to public administrators. In high performing governance systems, consequences emerge from high and low performance, as well as non-compliance. Leaders and civil servants seek to improve their own performance, and citizens provide feedback on the quality and quantity of services provided by and through government policy and operations. Performance improvement programmes emphasize developing measurable indicators of operations and their consequent results in order to use this information to reform weak processes.

V. SPECIAL CASE: POST-CONFLICT SITUATIONS

40. Peace, reconciliation and stability are linked to developing mechanisms of conflict resolution and policies and programmes of social reconciliation, thereby leading to recognized, appreciated and legitimate Government. For example, an emerging post-conflict situation is situated in a delicate and subtle process, just as likely to slip backwards into the abyss of violence as to confirm peaceful tendencies. Societies need to be able to imagine peaceful resolution of conflict and stable social and economic conditions. People need to be able to trust that their leaders and the government administrative machinery will not only support but also enforce the mutual, cooperative strategies of individuals and communities. By leading to the establishment of trust and confidence, effective government institutions and administrative machinery can shed the image of a victim of destruction and emerge as a protagonist in the restoration of the social and economic life of the country.

41. Especially operating under conditions of social and economic stress and turbulence, the government machinery can provide a framework for setting priorities for the society, for enabling the economic engine of growth to reassert itself, and for establishing mechanisms for peaceful social interaction. Especially in post-conflict situations, government administrative machinery can re-establish needed social services, essential infrastructure such as roads and telecommunications, credit institutions, sharing of information through media and through social interactions, and legal mechanisms for settling contract disputes as well as identifying and punishing criminal behaviour. Government institutions accomplish these tasks through (a) organizing the Government itself to establish policies and implement necessary programmes to support the reconstruction strategies of communities throughout the country, (b) enabling private sector development, and (c) encouraging non-governmental organizations to participate in community life and encouraging civil society empowerment, enabling citizens to express their needs, priorities and opinions on social and economic issues.

42. Socio-political disruptions, as well as dramatic economic shifts, lead to uncertainty and unpredictability. Social trust can be increased through a predictable legal system based on rule of law. With no one above the law, everyone can engage in social and economic activities knowing that a fair, impartial, and predictable system of adjudication awaits any disputes. Without this rule of law, individuals and communities feel justified in taking the law into their own hands or acting above the law. The knowledge that effective and efficient government administrative machinery is in place can discourage violent activities. Likewise, government institutions are strengthened with every passing day of peace. Development and peace are inextricably linked, and must be engaged simultaneously.

43. Especially in post-conflict situations, government administrative machinery can play a strong role in coordination of donors. Without a government machinery capable of developing political priorities and implementing government programmes, a war-torn society can continue to be at the mercy of the international community, which at best focuses on its perception of the interests of the society, and at worst focuses on the priorities of the international donor agencies who may have even been connected to the dynamics of

the violent conflict. Strong government administrative machinery provides focus and direction for the relief and development activities of the international community.

44. A starting point for restoring government administrative machinery in situations of conflict is an assessment of the existing administrative network. In some cases, the administrative machinery is intact and adversely affected only by orientation of budget priorities to military purposes. If national governmental machinery exists, then an assessment can be made concerning its financial, human and material resources capacity. This capacity assessment can be most effectively accomplished by a joint government-donor community team, thereby combining an understanding of local conditions and needs with donor capacity and interest. Although there is a tendency for humanitarian and technical assistance to be donor-driven in complex emergency situations, the inclusion of Government on assessment and management teams increases the likelihood of relevance and sustainability.

45. In the most extreme cases, the national government no longer functions or operates only within a limited territory. Infrastructure has been damaged, supplies have been looted and personnel killed or missing. Restoration is most difficult when damage has been greatest and especially where personnel costs have been high. Where the governmental institutions, non-governmental organizations, and basic social structures have been decimated, those people who are left cannot find familiar frameworks for mutual trust and assistance. Under these extreme circumstances, the restoration process is not only physical, economic and social, but also psychological. Rebuilding programmes in all these areas depend upon the existence of a minimum level of government activity to assess needs, set priorities and organize programmes. Thus, long-term development depends upon the restoration of government administrative machinery.

46. Restoration efforts are affected by the characteristics of the government administrative machinery prior to the violent conflict. If the government administration was well-articulated, with clear policy-setting mechanisms, strong implementation agencies and a reputation for delivering needed services to the people, then the goal of restoration will have a reasonable target concept which would be well-understood by the government officials as well as the people. If the previous governmental machinery was decentralized or at least deconcentrated to levels close to the grass roots, the local people will be able to articulate their expectations in a realistic manner. If services were delivered effectively and efficiently, there will be a high standard by which to assess restoration efforts. If government business had been carried out in a transparent and accountable manner, the people will be able to participate in restoration efforts because they will be knowledgeable and accustomed to participation in the machineries of government. Because restoration processes are expensive and time-consuming, it is useful to involve citizens fully not only so that they will understand the difficulties and the successes, but also so that they can participate in restoration processes at local levels.

47. It is equally important to note the extent to which the prior administrative machinery was modern, up-to-date, and reflected the best means for setting and implementing government policies. A restoration process

provides an opportunity to re-think the missions of the State and the means of achieving those tasks designated for government responsibility. To the extent that every modern government is in the process of "re-inventing" or "re-engineering" itself, the restoration process provides an added incentive because many government processes are no longer ongoing, but have ceased to operate. This temporary cessation of government work provides an opportunity to consider questions like: What should the State be responsible for in society? How should the State accomplish its tasks? What government administrative machinery can best support the accomplishment of these tasks?

48. Recent experience in post-conflict restoration of governance indicates several key areas: national leadership, effective coordination, strong civil society and private sector empowerment, rule of law, culture of cooperation, linkage between government-wide administrative frameworks and management improvement programmes in operational ministries, territorially based development strategies, training of human resources, and building upon modest but consistent success. These elements are essential for effective governance strategies leading to peace, stability, social cohesion and sustainable economic development.

49. Government machinery has an essential and indispensable role in rebuilding war-torn societies, focusing especially on facilitating social communication, political agenda setting, economic development and leading to the re-knitting of the fabrics of socio-economic life. Government administrative machinery can be designed to facilitate transparent communications and cooperation, thereby leading to effective coordination both in mechanisms for development and in a spirit of national reconciliation. Government administrative machinery can also build confidence and credibility through achieving consistent, effective and efficient programmatic successes.

Notes

[1] Report of the World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen, 6-12 March 1995 (United Nations publication, Sales No. 96.IV.8, chap. I, resolution 1, annex I.